

GENERAL NOTES.

Man-o'-War-bird etc. on the North Carolina Coast.—I have a letter from Mr. Russell J. Coles at the Bight of Cape Lookout, North Carolina, dated July 19, 1917, enclosing excellent photographs of a juvenile Man-o'-War-bird (*Fregata aquila*) in which he says: "On July 10, I and members of my crew watched for some time a Man-o'-War-bird attempting to fly against a heavy wind squall. The bird appeared very much exhausted as it came in from the sea against the wind. . . . At last, one of my crew struck at it and in dodging the blow, the bird fell in the sea alongside and was lifted into the boat. I kept it on board for half a day and, although at first it was too weak to show the usual aggressive spirit of its species, yet when rested it became very pugnacious and struck at all who approached it with beak and wings.

"Finally I released it after measuring and photographing, and it flew swiftly away to the south. From tip to tip of wings, it measured 7 ft. 4 in. which was wider than examples I have measured on Gulf coast of Florida. This is my first observation of this species as far north as this, and native fishermen do not recall having seen one here before.

"During the past five weeks, I have seen three flocks of Brown Pelicans [*Pelecanus occidentalis*] here, one a flock of twelve rested on the water just off point of Cape Lookout for thirty minutes on June 15."

Under date of July 27, Mr. Coles writes again from the same locality:

"Since my last letter to you, I have seen one small flock of eight, and one of nine Brown Pelicans; both flocks flying south. Then one lone Pelican remained half a day near my boat feeding in the Bight. Ten years ago, I saw only one Least Tern or "Striker" [*Sterna minima*] on about August 1st. Since then their numbers have increased each year, and I can now see 20 or 30 in a day."

The Man-o'-War-bird is a stray on the North Carolina coast, and the status there of Pelican and Least Tern is of interest.—J. T. NICHOLS, *New York, N. Y.*

Gadwall in Massachusetts.—Mr. Harry P. Sturtevant reports the capture at Nippinicket Pond, Bridgewater, Massachusetts, upon October 11, 1916, of two Gadwalls (*Chaulelasmus streperus*).—ARTHUR C. DYKE, *Bridgewater, Mass.*

Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) in a Phenomenal Position at Boston, Mass.—Upon entering the Public Garden about seven A. M. on March 25, 1917, while my eyes were turned in a somewhat different direction, I was conscious of a large bird rising from a grass plot at my right. This bird by a flight of about two hundred feet alighted in a large cottonwood tree which stands beside the pond within the Garden, taking a perch

forty feet or thereabouts above the ground. There it remained for full observation, assuming the statuesque attitude peculiar to the Bittern, neck, head, and bill in a straight line pointing up into the sky, and remaining motionless. Relying on its sense of self-concealment in such an attitude when in a marsh or swamp, this bird in the tree placed its reliance, as is its wont, on maintaining this attitude, and did so throughout the day. I remained in the Garden until 8.30, and when I came away the bird had changed neither position nor attitude from those assumed when it took its perch. Other observers' attention was called to this phenomenon, as I met them. And during both forenoon and afternoon friends, to whom I mentioned the occurrence at the breakfast table and who later visited the Garden, found the bird in the same position and attitude at different hours of the day. It was not concerned or disturbed upon observers' near approach to the tree or even standing directly under it, and as the tree is beside one of the principal paths of the Garden, there were passersby throughout the day. The Bittern took advantage of night, doubtlessly, to seek a more congenial location, for it was not present the following morning.

The date of this occurrence was by six days earlier than the earliest record of Bittern in Howe and Allen's 'Birds of Massachusetts,' which is March 31, 1894, when Dr. Walter Faxon observed one in the Cambridge Region (Brewster). The conditions were still wintry, although the breaking up had extended well toward the first springlike stage which really appeared two days later, when the ice was mostly gone from the pond and the earth had loosened from the grip of frost. As to the perch in the tree taken and maintained with full assurance of self-concealment, life-long ornithologists here, such as Mr. William Brewster and Dr. Charles W. Townsend, state that they have never seen a Bittern perching in a tree or bush. Dr. Townsend, however, writes me, "One day last summer at Ipswich in a rain storm I saw a Bittern standing on top of a small haystack near my house. He presented a curious and unusual appearance, and I made a note of it." And Mr. Chapman in his 'Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America,' p. 220, in comparing herons and bitterns states, "Herons perch and usually nest in trees; Bitterns rarely or never do." It is presumable, therefore, that the occurrence of Bittern perching in a tree may have been previously noted by observers, but, perhaps, such an occurrence as this bird in the Public Garden perching throughout the day and remaining for hours undisturbed and unconcerned in its typical statuesque attitude is unprecedented.—HORACE W. WRIGHT, *Boston, Mass.*

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) at Springfield, Mass.—On the twentieth of last February a female Golden Eagle was taken in Somers, Connecticut, about ten miles from here. This specimen is now in the Museum of Natural History, in Springfield.

During the last fifty years there is only one previous record of the occurrence of this species in this vicinity.—ROBERT O. MORRIS, *Springfield, Mass.*

Sparrow Hawks Nesting in a Bird House.— A pair of Sparrow Hawks have nested in a sort of a pigeon house that was built by a man on my place and fastened on top of a pole about 18 feet from the ground and placed in the middle of the chicken yard. It somewhat resembles a martin house, though the holes are larger. Of course, they have the house to themselves. It is located within 200 feet of a Martin house occupied by a large colony of these birds which are continually worrying the hawks when they return with food for the young. A week ago when I looked in the box there were three or four young ones covered with white down.— W. M. H. BROWNING, *New York, N. Y.*

Black Vulture in Massachusetts.— A female Black Vulture (*Catharista urubu*) was shot by Archer L. Pierce, Aug. 20, 1917, on the Burnham estate at the west end of Wenham, Mass. The bird was eating from a garbage pail at the time. The specimen has been sent to the Boston Society of Natural History.— JOHN C. PHILLIPS, *Wenham, Mass.*

Crow Roost near Boston, Pennsylvania.— For more than fifteen years there has been a large crow roost in the hilltops adjoining the borough of Boston, Pa. Recently a few hunters with shot guns have compelled the Crows to change their roost a distance of one fourth of a mile north to the hilltops of "Deadman's Hollow" which brings it within about half a mile of the city limits of McKeesport.

The writer succeeded in making a fair estimate of the number of birds gathering at the roost. Acres of trees blackened by masses of noisy crows is the usual impression that one gets from a visit to the winter night rendezvous. On March 10, 1916, the crows were driven out of the woods as they were gathering to roost whereupon they settled down over about 100 acres of snow covered fields. There they were visible and estimating one crow to every 200 square feet, a very low safe estimate, an approximate number of 20,000 crows was the result.

The ground covered and other factors entering into the estimate depends upon the writer's judgment as a civil engineer and surveyor.

This year while taking our Christmas bird census for 'Bird-Lore' 1,500 crows were counted flying overhead down the Youghiogheny River to the roost. The vast bulk of the crows came from the other directions and the 1,500 counted represent but a small percentage of the total number of crows.— THOS. L. MCCONNELL, *McKeesport, Pa.*

Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperiphona vespertina vespertina*) at Springfield, Mass.— For the last few years the Evening Grosbeak appears to be a regular winter visitor to this region. If this bird is to continue to appear here during the colder months, it will be interesting to know when its coming and going may be expected. Last season in central Massachusetts